



CPAC Newsletter

September 2004

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FEHB

Customer Service
Tuesday, 14 September
at the CAC from 8-1:00

Open Season Health
Fair at the CAC from 8-
2:00 pm 9 November

The 2005 FEHB Guides
– (Comparison Booklets)
will be available on line
at <http://www.opm.gov>
as well as all plan
Brochures.

The OPM web site has
electronic versions of the
open season guides,
plan brochures and

other information.

Open Season Guides
provide a summary of
participating health
plans, and cost
comparison for each
plan.

Plan Brochures contain
complete information on
benefits provides under
plan, including cost.
Check the plan brochure
“Change Page” it will list
all changes to coverage
and costs for 2005,
review the entire
brochure carefully.

All elections or changes
must be made through
ABC-C

Open season changes
are effective the first day
of the first full pay period
that begins in January.

The ABC-C web site
[https://
www.abc.army.mil](https://www.abc.army.mil) has a
link to OPMs web site. It
also gives important
information on Premium
conversion, Flexible
Spending Accounts, and
Long Term Care.

FEGLI 50th Anniversary Open Season

FEGLI 50th Anniversary
Open Season

1 Sep – 30 Sep 2004

Elections and changes
will not be effective until
3 Sep 2005

[http://www.opm.gov/
insure/life](http://www.opm.gov/insure/life) has all of the
information needed for
employees to decide if
they want to enroll or

change the current
FEGLI.

All eligible employees
can participate. All
employees currently not
enrolled may enroll and
elect basic and any or all
options. Employees
currently enrolled may
increase coverage to the
max or change their
current coverage.

Employees cannot use
the SF-2817 – They
must use the special FE
2004 form designed for
Open Season Only.

All elections and
changes must be made
through ABC-C. There
is a link to OPM for
additional information if
necessary.

FEGLI

Open Season - 1-30

September 2004:

-Employees may begin making changes.
Employees can revise or void their change at any time during the open season. (Note: Employees can also void the open season change at any time prior to the effective date.) After making an election, employees should print an "acknowledgement" copy for their records.
-If CPAC/CPOC receives a hard-copy election, contact the employee and direct him/her to the ABC-C.

Immediately Following Open Season - On or About 1 October 2004:

-CPOCs will electronically receive

"acknowledgement copies" of the elections for the purpose of substantiating the OPF with proof of election.

...And Beyond...until September, 2005:

-Employees who are eligible to make an immediate FEGLI election based on a life event may do so; some may require counselor assistance to ensure that the desired changes have been made. Again, employees may void an open season change at any time before it becomes effective if so desired.

September 4, 2005 (Processing):

-The open season changes will process on employees who are in pay status as of the earliest possible

effective date, **4 September 2005.**

Electronic copies of the FE-2004 elections and NPAs will be generated.
-Elections will continue to process as employees with pending elections on file return to pay status. The system checks the duty status each pay period.

Links and References: ABC-C

<https://www.abc.army.mil>
OPM FEGLI Open Season Home Page (links to BALs)
<http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/hr.asp>
OPM FEGLI Home Page
<http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/>
OPM FEGLI Calculator
<http://www.opm.gov/calculator/worksheet.as>

TSP Open Season

15 OCTOBER 2004 -----
31 DECEMBER 2004

Do not miss your opportunity to increase

your percentage or dollar amount deduction.

Visit the www.tsp.gov for the latest forms and

brochures. Many of the brochures and forms have been updated as of July 2004. Previous editions are not obsolete.



Filing Danger Pay and Post Differential

The Department of the Army has issued a policy memorandum that directs employees under contingency operations or in conjunction with the reconstruction of Iraq to submit the SF 1190 upon arrival at the danger pay or post differential location instead of filing for reimbursement after returning from the overseas detail or temporary duty travel (TDY). This change was effective as of May 16, 2004.

Danger pay is an allowance up to 25 percent of an employee's basic pay (excluding all allowances, differentials, or other additional compensation). Danger pay is established by the

Secretary of State when civil insurrection, civil war, terrorism or wartime conditions threaten physical harm or imminent danger to the health or well being of a majority of employees official stationed or detailed at a post in a foreign area.

Foreign post differential is additional compensation of up to 25 percent of an employee's basic pay. Foreign post differential is granted to employees at posts when conditions at that post involve extraordinary difficult living conditions, excessive physical hardship or notably unhealthy conditions.

Employees may relocate between different

locations where a variance in the allowances could occur. In addition to updating CIVTRACKS, employees are responsible for timely filing of SF-1190s in order to avoid overpayments.

Employees deploying should complete a Foreign Entitlements Information Sheet and send to their servicing CPAC Specialist before leaving. For more information, employees should consult with their Administrative Officer or servicing CPAC Specialist. The new guidance defines the responsibilities of the employee, the supervisor, the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, and the Civilian Personnel Operations Center.

"Danger pay is an allowance up to 25 percent of an employee's basic pay (excluding all allowances, differentials, or other additional compensation.)"

Benefits Information for New Employees

A meeting for administrative points of contact was held on 18 Aug 04. Representatives from Northeast Civilian Personnel Operations Center were present at the meeting as well as our local Civilian Personnel Advisory Center staff. Subjects covered in this meeting: USACPEA report, Student Employment Program, Pickup 50s,

Recruitment, Relocation & Retention Bonuses, reemployed annuitants, NSPS update, Reemployment and Priority Placement Programs, foreign entitlements, use or lose annual leave, FEGLI rate increases and open season, Time Off Awards, DEU & Resumix, ANSWER, new organization codes built at DFAS, Manager

Handbook, HR Course for New Supervisors, cut-off date for receipt of FY 04 award actions, Interagency Career Transition Assistance Plan (ICTAP), and not-to-exceed dates/suspenses. Each administrative POC received a packet of handouts on these subjects.

Applying for a Government Job

"First, read the job announcement carefully and acquaint yourself with what the Federal agency is looking for. Then, check your resume to ensure it's complete and includes the required information. Finally, capture how your experience matches the competencies and/or KSA's required for that job."

Here are Ten Tips for Letting Federal Employers Know Your Worth

So, you found the job you want. And it's with the Federal Government. Congratulations! You're embarking on an exciting journey with dynamic opportunities that Federal jobs provide. You're also competing with some of the best candidates around. How do you know you've shown future employers' your worth?

First, read the job announcement carefully and acquaint yourself with what the Federal agency is looking for. Then, check your resume to ensure it's complete and includes all the required information for the job you want. Next, capture how your experience matches the competencies and/or knowledge, skills, and abilities (ksa's) required for that job. Remember: Federal agencies base their decisions on merit so, follow these 10 tips carefully when describing you experience and skills.

1. Use words wisely.

Today, the key to a good application is getting the right information to the agency representative in a fast, readable style. How

do you do this? By using minimum words to provide maximum information. Just look at this example:

In this position, it was my responsibility to assist the program director on evaluating health care programs. Due to the fact that most of these centers were in rural areas, it was important that I traveled at least 3 days a week.

It's full of useless words and phrases such as due to the fact, it is important, and it was my responsibility that block your point. Cut them out for a stronger, easy-to-access message:

In this position, I assisted the program director on evaluating health care programs. Because most of these centers were in rural areas, I traveled at least 3 days a week.

Repeats can slow your message, too. Look at this line:

I worked with new law enforcement officers who were just entering the force and needed to learn techniques for identifying and interrogating suspects who they suspected of illegal activity. In my capacity, I trained them on these techniques.

Notice that new law

enforcement officers and who were just entering the force say the same thing? So does suspects and suspected of illegal activity. Less obvious is the repeated work with and trained. The revision would read:

I trained new law enforcement officers on techniques for identifying and interrogating suspects.

2. Keep sentences short and clear.

Short, direct sentences help the agency get your point. But remember, don't duplicate your resume. Rather, you're elaborating on significant points in full sentences. This line is so long:

My 12 years as a customer service representative have given me the opportunity to become comfortable speaking to virtually anyone and to answering questions calmly and professionally even when the person I am speaking to is upset.

it practically leaves the reader out-of-breath. By breaking up sentences, your point is more flowing:

My customer service

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representative experience provided opportunities to sharpen my skills. For example, I am comfortable speaking to virtually anyone. I can answer questions calmly and professionally, even when the person I am speaking to is upset.

3. Make your message stand out.

Paragraphs that are easy-to-see are more than *nice* - they can make or break your message. So remember, keep your paragraphs brief, usually between 5 and 10 lines depending on content. Put important points first - where they're most visible. Here are some possibilities:

Short paragraph

While an associate editor for Agricultural Magazine, I selected each month's special features on scientific findings and agricultural economics; hired five diverse new writers, all with scientific backgrounds; and reviewed all copy to ensure a style accessible to readers ranging from rural farmers to university researchers.

Subheaders

While an associate editor for Agricultural Magazine, I

was responsible for:

Critical content decisions. *I selected each month's special features on the relationship between scientific findings and agricultural economics, among other articles.*

Quality of articles. *I reviewed all copy to ensure the style was accessible to readers ranging from rural farmers to university researchers.*

4. Focus on outcome.

What is the most important aspect of your work experience? The answer may be a surprise: the outcome. In fact, you'd be amazed by how many people forget to mention this critical aspect of their experience altogether. When discussing outcome, be sure to discuss the *whats*, the *hows*, and the *breadth and scope* of your experiences:

1. **What occurred.** Did you improve the workplace? Perhaps you refined technology tools, created programs, or organized procedures. Regardless, let the agency know *what* occurred. Use brief examples to best illustrate your point whenever possible.
2. **How much and how many.** Did you start new

projects? How many? Did you save your previous office money? Time? How much? Don't forget percentages, numbers, and degrees that apply.

Notice how this example falls flat because it ignores the outcome:

As a supervisor at Early Start, I oversaw the development of grant proposals. While in this position, I put systems in place to ensure that my employees provided the government with the exact information it needed.

While this revision is more revealing...and competitive:

As a supervisor at Early Start, I oversaw a team of 10 employees who developed grant proposals. While in this position, I developed a template-based system to help my coworkers anticipate requirements. This helped us meet all deadlines a week in advance and create proposals that won us two grants more than the previous year.

5. Showcase your role.

Did you work on your own? As part of a team? In a supervisory capacity? As a team leader? Let the agency know your role in the projects. For example,

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this response:

I helped put together conferences. Among my responsibilities were sending invitations, calling potential guests, and preparing the conference materials. would be stronger if worded this way:

As part of a team of five employees, I helped put together conferences. Among other responsibilities, I had to coordinate with my coworkers to send invitations, call potential guests, and prepare the conference materials.

Were you promoted while working on a project? If so, mention that too. Note, for example, this response doesn't mention a promotion:

In my last position, I spent 2 to 3 months at a time in the field collecting samples for the study. The following year, I spent most of time in the lab, only going to the field occasionally.

while this revision does:

In my position as Project Manager, I spent 2 to 3 months at a time in the field, overseeing 5 specialists who assisted me in collecting samples for the study. The following year, I was promoted to Senior Project Manager which required

that I spent more time in the lab. As a result, I only went to the field occasionally.

6. Remember - timeframes count.

Timeframes count so be sure to address these questions: what were the dates or length of time you worked on a project or job? Did you work full-time or part-time? If part-time, what percentage of your time did you do that work? For example, this candidate could have worked in his position for a few months as a part-time employee:

I served as a contractor for the agency. I regularly produced educational videos and IVT training sessions.

This response is stronger worded this way:

From 1999-2002, I served as a full-time contractor for the agency. I spent at least 30% of my time producing educational videos and IVT training sessions.

If you didn't spend substantial time in a particular position, include the dates anyway. Other information such as the outcome of your experience or the scope and depth of your work will underscore its value.

7. Value your experience.

Many experiences illuminate your significance as a candidate. For example, you may have published relevant articles in your college newspaper or a local publication. Or you may have gained valuable experience through:

- *Leadership positions.* Were you president of your sorority or fraternity? Did you lead a team either as part of your classroom experience or a volunteer group? Mention these positions and the outcome of your efforts.
- *Extracurricular activities.* Perhaps you volunteered or belonged to a club that gave you valuable experience. Let the agency know specifics including projects, dates, and how your experience applies to the field.
- *Internships.* Never underestimate the importance of hands-on education, especially internships, whether during the summer or over an entire semester.

Regardless, mention them!

8. Show and tell.

Telling about your experience is great but be sure to use examples, too.

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See how this candidate's job sounds pretty blasé:

As a maintenance mechanic, I often worked in settings that required I maintain control of every move in the operation.

Look at the difference a few specifics can make:

As a maintenance mechanic, I often worked in settings that required I maintain control of every move in the operation. For example, for 16 months I worked on renovation projects in the Smithsonian Institutions where I had to move priceless museum exhibits using forklifts, cranes, skids, and rollers.

9. Resist additions

You may be tempted, but please resist sending an additional package with copies of awards, publications, training certificates, letters of

recommendation, lengthy job descriptions, writing samples, or a photo unless the agency specifically requests it.

Instead, keep important information where it belongs - in your application or resume.

10. Illuminate your resume - don't repeat it.

When writing about your experience to describe how it matches the competencies or ksa's required by a job, don't simply repeat your resume but illuminate important facts or give examples to shed new light on the breath and scope of your experience. Notice how this resume sample provides an overview of the candidate's experience - in this case as a trainer for law enforcement officers:

Scheduled and conducted training and maintained training records of all law

enforcement personnel.

When writing about her experience, however, the candidate added these details:

While a supervisor in the training department I conducted sessions in anti-terrorism techniques, security and protection procedures, and suspect interviewing strategies. I also trained react teams and counter-terrorism units, operated weapons ranges, and conducted fitness tests.

This gave the agency fresh information about the experience she could bring to the job. Whatever your education and experience, it deserves to be highlighted in your resume, competencies, and KSA's. Follow these tips for guidance in presenting your strengths to potential Federal employers.



Annual Leave—Use it—Don't Lose It

Civilian employees normally forfeit unused annual leave in excess of 240 hours at the end of the leave year.

Leave Year Beginning and Ending Dates

A leave year begins on

the first day of the first full biweekly pay period in a calendar year. A leave year ends on the day immediately before the first day of the first full biweekly pay period in the following calendar year. The beginning and ending dates of leave years 2004

through 2010 shown below apply to **most employees**.

The beginning and ending dates of leave year 2004, shown below, applies to **most employees**:

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Leave Year Beginning
Date: January 11, 2004

Leave Year Ending Date:
January 8, 2005

Date for Scheduling "Use
or Lose" Annual Leave:
November 27, 2004

Employees may have
forfeited leave restored to
them if the leave was
scheduled in advance with
the employee
subsequently being denied
the opportunity to take that
scheduled leave due to
the exigencies of public

business, a lengthy period
of illness, or an
administrative error. In
cases of the leave being
denied due to an exigency
of public business, the
leave must have been
**scheduled/rescheduled
in writing, prior to the
beginning of the 3rd bi-
weekly pay period
before the end of the
leave year. i.e., 29
November 2003.** A
Standard Form 71,
Application for Leave, may
be used for this purpose.
As an alternative to
having your "use or lose"
annual leave forfeited,

please consider donating
excess leave to the
employees enrolled in the
Voluntary Transfer of
Annual Leave Program.
Someone will appreciate
the gesture and the leave
will not be wasted.
Questions concerning the
restoration of forfeited
leave should be
addressed to the CPAC
Human Resources
Specialist assigned to your
organization.
the CPAC Human
Resources Specialist
assigned to your
organization.

Beneficiary Forms

*"Benefits are paid
according to the
Order of
Precedence as
follows:
Designated
Beneficiary,
Spouse, Child/
Children in Equal
Share, Parents,
Executor/
Administrator of
Estate, Next of
Kin.."*

If you do not have a
designation of beneficiary
form on file, benefits are
paid according to the
Order of Precedence as
follows:

- Designated Beneficiary
- Spouse
- Child/Children in Equal Share
- Parents
- Executor/Administrator of Estate
- Next of Kin

An exception to the Order
of Precedence is payment
of Federal Employees'
Group Life Insurance
proceeds subject to a
court order requiring
benefits be paid to a
specific person(s). It is not
necessary to have a
beneficiary form on file, if

you are satisfied with the
normal order of
precedence. If, however,
you have completed a
designation of beneficiary
form in the past, it is your
responsibility to ensure
that the form reflects the
beneficiary you currently
desire. A will or last
testament **does not**
control how Federal
benefits are paid unless
the benefits are paid to
the estate. Beneficiary
forms may be completed
for benefits following the
chart below.

Employees who are in
CSRS Offset, would
complete the CSRS
Designation of Beneficiary
form.

You may access these
forms electronically by
clicking on the Office of
Personnel Management's
(OPM) website at [http://
www.opm.gov/forms](http://www.opm.gov/forms) for
the SF 1152, 2808, 2823,
and 3102. You can obtain
a copy of the TSP 3 from
the Thrift Savings Plan
(TSP) website at [http://
www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov). Once you
complete your forms, you
should submit the SF
1152, 2823, & 3102 to
your CPOC. You will
submit the SF 2808, if
applicable, to OPM at the
address on the reverse
side of the form. The TSP
3 should be sent to the
National Finance Center
at the address on the
reverse side of the form.
You should make copies

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of your beneficiary forms prior to submitting them to the appropriate offices, but when you get your copies back certified by the appropriate personnel, ensure your family

members know the location of your filed copies.

If you have any questions regarding the completion of beneficiary forms, you may contact the Army

Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C) at 1-877-ARMY CTR (276-9287). Hearing impaired employees can contact a Benefits Counselor at 1-877-ARMY TDD (276-9833).

| Form # | Name of Form | Benefits/Proceeds |
|---------|--|--|
| SF 2808 | CSRS-Designation of Beneficiary | Retirement Contributions Lump Sum (when no survivor annuity is payable). |
| SF 3102 | FERS-Designation of Beneficiary | Retirement Contributions Lump Sum (when no survivor annuity is payable). |
| SF 2823 | Designation of Beneficiary - Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance (FEGLI) Program | Note: If you designate minor children to receive benefits, a court-appointed guardian will be necessary to receive proceeds; otherwise the Office of Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance will hold proceeds on deposit until the child reaches age 18 or the age of majority based on state law. |
| SF 1152 | Designation of Beneficiary - Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Civilian Employee | Unpaid compensation that may be due at your death, such as unpaid salary, unused annual leave, etc. If you transfer to a new agency, you will need to complete a new form. |
| TSP 3 | TSP - Designation of Beneficiary | Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) proceeds. |

National Security Personnel System (NSPS) Update

Working Groups will convene on July 27, 2004 for approximately 2 months to identify options and alternatives for the design of the NSPS. Army has identified eleven human resources and manager subject matter experts to participate. Working Groups will be functionally aligned to address the following human resources program

areas: compensation (classification and pay banding); performance management; workforce hiring, assignment, pay setting, and workforce shaping; employee engagement and appeals; and labor relations. Informational sources will include input from the FOCUS Groups, Town Hall Meetings, and union leadership meetings. Also

to be considered are data review and analysis from the alternative personnel systems and laboratory demonstration projects, the NSPS statute, as well as earlier studies. In addition, Army has developed thirty Information Papers which identify topics for Working Group consideration.

ABC-C Guide to Retirement Now Available

Now available on the ABC-C website, the Guide to Retirement will be of assistance to employees regardless of when they plan to retire. The guide is also a great “first stop” for those who have decided to retire but do not know how to begin the

process. Additionally, Civilian Personnel Advisory Centers may refer employees to this guide, as it explains the entire retirement process. The availability of the Guide to Retirement has been marketed throughout the human resources

community and is accessible from the ABC-C website or at <https://www.abc.army.mil/Information/ABCRetirement/Information/RetirementGuide.doc>.

Non-Appropriated Fund Vacancies

Child and Youth Program
Assistant—\$9.65 per
hour—Child Development
Center—Flex Position



Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

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